Cariboo-Chilcotin
Land Use Plan

Regional Biodiversity Conservation Strategy

UPDATE NOTE #2

Amalgamation of Small NDT-BEC Units in Relation to Assessment of Seral Objectives and Old Growth Management Area Planning

Prepared by:
Biodiversity Conservation Strategy Committee

Prepared for:

Cariboo Mid-Coast Interagency Management Committee

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Biodiversity Conservation Strategy Update Notes are prepared by the Cariboo-Chilcotin Biodiversity Conservation Strategy Committee for purposes of technical clarification or technical additions to the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy report, submitted to the Cariboo-Mid Coast Interagency Management Committee in July 1996. These notes are prepared in response to issues and questions presented to the Biodiversity Committee or recognized by the members of the Committee.

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Amalgamation of Small NDT-BEC Units in Relation to Assessment of Seral Ojectives and Old Growth Management Area Planning

Introduction

Seral stage targets should be achieved on each NDT-BEC unit within a landscape unit (LU) to best meet biodiversity objectives. However, the regional Biodiversity Conservation Strategy (1996) indicates that non-valley bottom[1], biogeoclimatic units <5000 ha (or valley bottom units <1000 ha.) within a landscape unit are not required to meet all seral stage targets within that specific area. This is because natural disturbances could potentially alter seral condition across most of the NDT-BEC unit due to its small size. Where seral objectives are not met within small NDT-BEC units, they are still required to be met within a larger area of the landscape unit, including the area contributed by the small NDT-BEC unit. This management strategy provides short-term flexibility to forest planners where seral targets within small NDT-BEC units have been compromised due to natural disturbance or past development.

Seral Targets for Small BEC Units in Adjacent Landscape Units

Where adjacent landscape units have portions of the same NDT-BEC unit that are smaller than 5,000 ha. in individual landscape units, but have an aggregated total area larger than 5,000 ha., the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy noted that consideration should be given to meeting the overall target for the aggregated NDT-BEC unit. This does not imply shifting seral target from one LU to another. Rather it highlights an additional management consideration when managing for seral condition in the adjacent LU. If it is possible, seral condition in the adjacent small NDT-BEC unit should be met or exceeded so that particular ecosystem is not consistently eroded because of its distribution across landscape units. Each landscape unit must still meet its overall seral targets in consideration of the variety and extent of NDT-BEC units that fall within it.

Amalgamation of Small NDT-BEC Units with Larger NDT-BEC Units

When seral targets for small (<5000 ha.) NDT-BEC units cannot be achieved in that unit, the guidelines for aggregating are as follows:

1. Combine the NDT-BEC unit with another that is in the same NDT if it exists within the same landscape unit. For example, a landscape unit contains the following: NDT 3-SBPS (4000 ha), NDT 3-SBS (10,000 ha) and NDT 2-ICH (8,000 ha). In this case, if it is necessary to meet the seral requirements of the small NDT3-SBPS unit over a broader area, it should be done by combining it with the NDT 3-SBS unit, rather than the NDT2-ICH unit.
2. The seral targets for the aggregated area are the sum of the individual targets for each of the contributing NDT-BEC units. Using the above example, for an intermediate biodiversity emphasis, the aggregate old target would be the sum of NDT3-SBS (10,000ha. x 11%) + NDT3-SBPS (4,000 ha. x 7%) = 1380 ha.

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[1] Valley bottom units are NDT-BEC units which occur on valley floors and only the lower third of adjacent valley slopes. They are given special consideration due to their importance for many terrestrial and aquatic wildlife species. Valley bottom units are identified in Table 9 of the biodiversity Conservation Strategy Report.

3. The seral age target to be met is driven by the larger NDT-BEC unit involved. In the above example, that is the NDT3-SBS which defines mature as 100 years and old as 140 years. In this case there is no difference between the age targets for the SBPS or the SBS.

Old Growth Management Areas (OGMAs) and Small BEC Units

Analysis of old forest seral representation has traditionally been non-spatial, but CCLUP Integration determined that old forest representation should be met as permanent "set-asides" in the forest land base. To meet this CCLUP requirement and other distributional criteria important to biodiversity such as interior forest, patch size and patch distribution, the old seral target is being spatially delineated as OGMAs.

The ability to maintain long-term OGMAs as set-asides in the face of natural disturbance is the same regardless of size of NDT-BEC unit. Consequently, amalgamation of small NDT-BEC units with larger ones for OGMA planning is **not required.** However, the NDT-BEC units may be combined where the current habitat condition of the small one is poor (see also Transition OGMAs).

Achievement of long-term CCLUP targets should not be affected by meeting OGMA targets on small NDT-BEC units. The targets are assessed in terms of area and the total area allocated to old forest within a landscape unit is the same whether it is distributed among all NDT-BEC units or aggregated within the larger ones.

Transition OGMAs

Circumstances exist where the intended long-term location of an OGMA lies inside a constrained area, but poor habitat condition of the constrained area precludes OGMA establishment there now. The approach used is to identify a recruitment area in the constrained area and a transition OGMA in the conventional land base. The purpose of the transition OGMA is to meet the old forest objectives until such time as the recruitment area attains suitable habitat condition. Where transition OGMAs are required, they may be located in small NDT-BEC units or in aggregated NDT-BEC units depending upon current habitat suitability.

Summary: Key Points

- Seral stage target cannot be transferred between LUs.
- Small NDT-BEC units that occur across several LUs should receive special management consideration so that those ecosystems are not consistently eroded with respect to attainment of seral objectives.
- Amalgamation of small NDT-BEC units should focus on grouping together the most similar ecosystems within the LU.
- The old forest seral requirement is being mapped spatially as OGMAs.
- It is appropriate to place OGMAs in small NDT-BEC units consistent with the target for that unit.
- Where small NDT-BEC units currently do not have suitable habitat conditions, OGMAs may be located in other NDT-BEC types within the same LU, consistent with the guidelines for amalgamation.